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THE AFRICAN REPOSITORY,

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COLONIAL JOURNAL.

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WASHINGTON, MAY, 1846.

[No. 5.

"The Pons."

THIS name will long be remembered, both in this country and in Liberia. She presented at the time of her capture a picture so shocking to all the feelings of humanity, as to gather around her associations which many years will not obliterate. How long will it be before the memories of the hundreds of victims found in her and landed at Monrovia, will cease to retain the vivid recollections of the days and nights they spent in her horrible hold? How long ere they will cease to cherish the feelings of bursting joy which enraptured their bosoms when they found themselves actually landed on their own native shores again? And how many hearts there are in America, who, having been moved to contribute something to relieve the poor creatures saved from worse than death, will long retain the vivid impression at first received by the bare hearing of the shocking scene which "The Pons" presented on her arrival at Monrovia with her freight of distressed children and youth?

Considerable anxiety is felt to know what will be the fate of the vessel and her *American captain*. Hers is a clear case of *piracy* under our laws, and it is earnestly to be hoped will meet with judgment as such. The Philadelphians seem anxious to have it appear that she was not owned in that city at the time when she was captured. This they may perhaps be able to do; but can they show that she was not transferred or sold to her present owners by her former Philadelphia owners or their agents, knowing that she was to be employed in the slave trade? Her Italian captain says that most of the vessels now employed in the slave trade of the western coast of Africa are obtained from Americans. If there are men in Philadelphia interested in the "Pons," they will doubtless say nothing about it, as they would prefer the loss of their *interest*, to the loss of character consequent upon attempting to defend it. This appears from the fact, that when proclamation was made in the

U. S. district court, in the case of the "Pons," for any person to come forward to show cause why said vessel should not be condemned and sold for a violation of the act of Congress of May 10th, 1800, no person answered. By the said act of Congress, it requires *three* proclamations in open court, before the vessel can be sold. But it is probable that the certainty of her being condemned, either by the American or the Brazilian authorities, will deter the owners from claiming her; especially when it is remembered that the expense of a legal contest would pay for another vessel and save time.*

Feeling the deep iniquity of the slave trade, and the dishonor of continuing so horrible a traffic, our own government early pronounced it to be a crime punishable by the heaviest penalties. Several nations of Europe soon followed the example, and have entered into treaties for its suppression. The United States and England have generally been faithful to fulfil their engagements. But, unhappily, Spain and Brazil have taken no efficient steps for enforcing their own laws, or for fulfilling their treaty stipulations, and the consequence is, that immense numbers of Africans are annually torn from their homes to supply the active demand which exists in the slave markets of Brazil, and the Spanish Islands of Cuba and Puerto Rico

We believe the "Pons" contained a larger number of slaves (913) than has ever before been captured in

one vessel. Very few vessels when taken have contained more than four or five hundred, and seven hundred is the highest number we remember to have heard of in one vessel.

We cannot, however, say this of vessels which have escaped capture. Many of them have shipped cargoes numbering from *twelve* to *fifteen hundred*. "The Pons" intended to have taken fifteen hundred! She left about *six thousand* in the barracoons at Cabenda!

The barque "*Carolina*," from Quilimane, landed *nine hundred and seventy-six* slaves at the Island of Parcos, near to Ubatuba, Brazil. How many more she shipped we cannot tell. The barque "*Quarto de Marco*," from the same place, landed *nine hundred and fifty* slaves at the Island of Tamondoa, near to St. Sebastian's. The brig "*Luzitano*," from Mosambique, landed *eight hundred* slaves at Campos. The brig "*Triumfante*," from the same place, landed *seven hundred and twelve* at the same place. The brig "*Triumfo d'Inveja*," from Quilimane, landed eight hundred and fourteen at the same place. The brig "*Jehovah*," from Angola, made three voyages in thirteen months, without entering any port, and landed, in boats and fishing canoes at three different points along the coast of Brazil, *eighteen hundred and twenty* slaves!

The "Panther," one of the vessels taken by the *Yorktown* and sent to this country for trial, is an old

* The *Pons* has been condemned since this was written. No person came forward to claim her.

Indiaman, with a double deck, and as well calculated for a large load of slaves as if she had been built for that express purpose. She had been waiting two months on the coast for an opportunity to ship her slaves and elude the vigilance of the cruisers, and had made preparations for taking *fifteen hundred on board!* According to the papers found on board, she belongs to J. A. Potter, of Providence, and was chartered by Fonseca, at Rio Janeiro, for \$1,750 a month, and two months paid in advance.

Cabenda is one of the most noted slave stations on the coast. Why do not the British cruisers watch the place night and day, and thus render it impossible to ship the thousands of slaves always ready? They do watch it a part of the time, and the danger of capture is considerable. But the profits are so enormous, as to induce the traders to run any risk, and resort to every expedient. They even take them in open launches across the ocean, some thirty or forty at a time. As they go before the trade wind, and seldom have bad weather, there is very little risk in it.

The slaves cost at the factories on the coast from \$8 to \$18 each, and will sell in any part of Brazil for \$300. From this it will be apparent that the profit is enormous. If the "Pons" had made her voyage in safety, she would have cleared about \$250,000. If the Panther had been successful, she would have cleared some \$370,000 to \$400,000!

Upon the most moderate compu-

tation, there are an average of *three hundred thousand* victims of the slave trade annually! To obtain this number, the coast and the interior of Africa are desolated by fire and sword. In its prosecution, we behold all that is aggravated in war, atrocious in murder, and brutal in oppression. Yonder may be seen a peaceful village, at once surrounded by a horde of barbarians, its dwellings fired, the aged, the very young, the infirm and the badly wounded, slain without remorse or pity; the healthy and the vigorous fastened by cords or iron fetters, and yoked together, are marched off to the coast; many of whom die from hunger, thirst and fatigue upon the road.

"Twas night: the hamlet lay in balmy rest;
The babe was slumbering on its mother's breast;
The father dreamt the child was at his knee,
While he reposed beneath his father's tree.
Falsely secure, they deemed no evil nigh;
The spoiler came, arose the deathful ery;
Their loved home flaming through the gloom of
night

Revealed their terror, and betrayed their flight.
Weak, worn and manacled, behold them stand
By the dull waters of that dismal strand:
Doomed in yon floating den to cross the wave,
Their happiest fate to find the surge their grave:
Their last lorn hope to view their native shore
When the sad term of hated life is o'er."

Then follows the shipment of these wretched beings on board the slave ship, their close package between the decks, with nothing in the world on, and nothing to lie upon softer than a plank; their incredible sufferings from disease, want of air and food, and the vast mortality which often occurs.

Now the question occurs, how

can these evils be remedied? What power can be brought to stay this tide of woe and death? Armed vessels, for thirty years, have been fitted out at an enormous expenditure of money, and the loss of the lives of multitudes employed on board of them, but with little avail. The slaver pursues his traffic as vigorously as when these measures were first attempted, and as long as his profits are so great he will pursue it, in defiance of all the navies of the world, and in utter disregard of humanity and justice.

We respect the motives of governments in keeping squadrons on that coast for the suppression of the slave trade. But we think there is a more

excellent way. Whoever examines the history of colonization at Liberia, will see that something effectual has been done there for the suppression of the trade along that part of the coast. We can, to all such, commend the cause which we advocate with a firm assurance that it will meet a response in their hearts and *consciences too*. It is the cause of humanity, of justice and benevolence to those who are in circumstances of the deepest wretchedness. To carry it nobly forward, funds are needed. Will not our friends come liberally to aid in the accomplishment of so much good, and the prevention of so much evil?

The United States Government and Re-captured Africans.

SINCE our last number was issued we have been repeatedly asked, "is it possible that our government makes no provision for the support of the slaves they land at Monrovia?" And we have as often been compelled to answer, it is even so. In the early history of the efforts of the United States Government for the suppression of the slave trade, the law of 1819 was understood to make provision for supporting re-captives after being landed in Liberia, until they could take care of themselves. President *Monroe* so interpreted it, and acted accordingly. But of late years the attorney generals have construed the law differently, and have decided that it simply provides for returning

re-captives to Liberia, and for keeping a "United States agent for re-captured Africans" there; and then leaves them entirely destitute, and him without a dollar to provide for their comfort. This is a most singular case indeed. Our government has engaged in a humane effort to benefit the poor Africans, by suppressing the slave trade. For this purpose, it supports a squadron on the coast at a very heavy expense. One of the vessels of this squadron, carrying out her instructions, seizes a slave ship with upwards of *nine hundred* children and youth on board, carries them back to the coast and pitches them on shore, in a sick and dying condition, and makes no provi-

sion for taking care of them even for a single day! This cannot be regarded in any other light than that of sheer injustice to the re-captives, and oppression to the citizens of Liberia. There is no obligation resting on them to support these people. They have to struggle hard to take care of themselves, unaided by governmental protection, and oppressed by those stronger than themselves. But in the present instance, they came forward nobly to supply the neglect of our government. But for Liberia, what would have become of those re-captured children?

In 1843, through the influence of some of the friends of colonization, Congress appropriated \$5,000 for the benefit of re-captives after being landed in Liberia. This sum was placed at the disposal of the PRESIDENT of the United States, who directed \$2,000 of it to be sent in the barque *Renown* to Liberia, for the purpose of building a house or houses for their reception and occupation, until they could build houses for themselves. The *Renown* was wrecked at Port Praya while unloading government stores, and as our government never insures, this \$2,000 was a total loss. The PRESIDENT then directed the remaining \$3,000 to be sent out in the ship *Virginia*, and \$2,000 to be spent in

building the said houses, and the remaining \$1,000 to be placed in Dr. Lugenbeel's hands, as United States agent, for the support of any re-captives who might be placed in his charge. This, then, is the only provision made by the United States government. It will readily be perceived, that after paying expenses of landing the people, and supplying their hunger, very little would be left. It was very fortunate that our emigrant ship, the *ROANOKE*, had arrived only a few days before the "*Pons*," with a good supply of provisions, &c. Our vessel from New Orleans would also reach there about the last of February, and render further assistance. But our friends will at once see that we shall be much embarrassed, unless we can raise the means to supply the place of the provisions and trade goods diverted from their appropriate use, to the benefit of these re-captives.

In reply to the many inquiries made us, as to what we are doing to guard against future emergencies, and to compensate for the past neglect of our government to carry out its benevolent operations to their proper end, we can only state that we shall not leave any thing undone to induce Congress to make an appropriation for the purpose. But whether we shall succeed yet remains to be determined.

Circular Appeal of the Methodist Liberian Mission

FEELING anxious to aid the cause of missions in Liberia in every way

possible, we insert at length, in another column, the *appeal* of the mis-

missionaries of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Liberia, to their friends and patrons in this country, for means to enable them to maintain and educate the one hundred re-captives which they took from those landed from the slaver "Pons." It is a strong appeal. We trust that not only the members of that church will give it a careful perusal and a liberal response, but also that all Christians and philanthropists will consider it a privilege to aid in this most Christian work. The reader will not fail to notice some touching incidents recorded in the circular. The devoted missionaries deserve great credit for their behavior to these poor victims. The Rev. Dr. Ting, of New York, at the great colonization meeting in the Tabernacle on the subject of raising assistance for the "Pons" re-captives, is reported to have paid the following just tribute to the missionaries and the colonists:—

"These Methodist brethren have manifested a spirit which will ever do them honor. It is a Christian spirit; and when the bright Sabbath dawned on that hapless shore, and while these holy men were engaged in prayer, as these wretched captives were thrown in their midst, and were received with the open hearts and arms of sympathy and kindness, can there be a doubt that attending angels regarded the scene with deepening interest? Can there be a doubt that a smiling Saviour realized that these Methodist brethren were representatives of himself? 'What care I, sir,' said Dr. T., 'for official sanction and appointment, coming down through successive ages by some mysterious

agency, when there is this life-like spirit of my Master so clearly manifested.' (Applause.)

"Sir, this is evidence enough of the presence of the Master—of conformity to the Spirit of Jesus. It was Jesus first and last—Jesus acting in the hearts of these men. Jesus upon whose shoulders the government is placed, and who shall award the blessing."

A Circular, addressed to the friends of Africa and African Missions—containing a few facts relative to the re-capture of nine hundred slaves in the barque "Pons"—their horrible condition on board—their liberation at the colony of Liberia—their distribution at said colony, &c., &c.—An appeal to the humanity and benevolence of the christian public.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

The unprecedentedly affecting circumstances which have called this circular into being, will speak for themselves in the following communications. In fact, the scenes and their connexions beggar description. The excitement which they occasion, transports the beholder for the time being beyond the regions of cool, deliberate account; and thus unfitted for anything like a dispassionate survey of the scene of misery and wretchedness every where and in every countenance apparent, we confine ourselves to a few naked facts.

But it is to be hoped humanity will feel the wrong thus inflicted on the sufferers. God certainly will, and his justice will require it. We were at the beach at the time of the re-captives' landing from the hold of the slave ship. The poor creatures, many of whom must, to all appearance, soon be added to the number of the dead, were most truly objects of commiseration. As they neared the shore and were permitted to leap into the surf that rolled upon the beach,

they plunged from the sides of the boat into the cool grateful water, in such a manner as clearly enough to show that it afforded a pleasure not to be described after so horrible a captivity. They were emaciated, scarred, and many of them covered with sores or scabs. But we forbear, and ask—Will the friends of missions leave them among us, in our restricted circumstances, without a powerful effort to aid us in educating, elevating, and christianizing them? Shall the exclamation of surprise, perhaps of execration, which this account may inspire, be all any individual will do towards relieving and assisting them? A few of us have done what we could for the present. We purpose, however, making a more general effort, and then doing ourselves again. But we want *help*. To our Missionary Board we look with confidence. It has always met our emergencies with prompt liberality. It will do so again, undoubtedly. But then there are others to whom these facts must make a touching appeal. Where are our benevolent, liberal-hearted *colored* friends. They, above all others, must experience a peculiar pleasure in collecting and forwarding benefactions. We wish them distinctly to understand that they are appealed to at this crisis. We hope to hear from them in tones that will tell upon the comfort of their unfortunate brethren. All shall be faithfully applied.

COMMUNICATIONS.

LETTER FROM DR. LUGENBEEL.

Mr. Editor:—In the midst of my arduous and responsible duties, I cannot find sufficient time to write a detailed account, relative to the recaptured slaves who were committed to my care by the officer in command of the slave ship “Pons,” now lying at anchor in our harbor; but I will give you a few of the particulars.

The “Pons” was captured by Capt. Bell, of the U. S. ship Yorktown, in latitude about three degrees south, three days out from Cabenda. At the time she was taken, there were about *nine hundred* slaves on board. On the first day after her capture, nineteen died; and by the time she arrived at this place, during a passage of fourteen days, the number was reduced to *seven hundred and fifty-six*; all of whom I have this day succeeded in landing. Several of them are now in a dying condition, but the majority of them are fine looking boys, from about ten to twenty years of age. There are only forty-seven girls in the company.

It was truly delightful to witness the demonstrations of pleasure which were exhibited by these rescued victims of the abominable traffic, when they again pressed the soil of their native country; and realized for a truth that they were breathing the air of freedom. Their songs of deliverance were borne upon the passing breeze; while they simultaneously clapped their hands for joy. I have already disposed of nearly three hundred of them to responsible persons in the colony, including one hundred which I have placed in the care of the Rev. J. B. Benham, Superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Mission, to be educated for future usefulness in their native land.

J. W. L. GENBEEL,

U. S. Agent for Liberated Africans.

Dec. 16, 1845.

Extract of a letter from one of the Missionaries of the Methodist Episcopal Church to a friend in New York.

MONROVIA, Dec. 15, 1845.

Last evening, after we had returned from meeting, and had commended ourselves to God in prayer, and thus closed up the enjoyments and privi-

leges of our first Sabbath in Africa, we were surprised by the entrance of one of our neighbors who brought us intelligence that a slaver, the Pons, of Philadelphia, had been captured by the United States sloop-of-war Yorktown, Captain Bell, and that she was now lying in our harbor with 750 captives on board that were to be landed here. We could not learn further particulars, than that the vessel was captured on the 1st inst., when three days out from Cabenda, a noted slave factory on the coast south of the equator. That, when taken, there were over 900 of these miserable creatures on board, but that 150 of them had died during the last fourteen days.

I had read and heard much of slavery and the horrors attendant upon the slave trade; now an opportunity offered to know from actual observation, whether the statements with which I had been made acquainted, were exaggerated or not. In company with His Excellency Governor Roberts and several others, I this morning went on board the prize. I had been prepared, to some extent, for a scene of horror, by the account of Lieut. Cogdell, the gentlemanly officer in command; but I found the half had not been told me. Nay, it is utterly impossible for language to convey an appropriate idea of the suffering of that wretched company. The decks were literally crowded with poor abject beings. The living and the dying were huddled together with less care than is bestowed upon the brute creation. Here and there might be seen individuals in the last agonies of expiring nature, unknown, and apparently unnoticed. There was no offer of sympathy to alleviate in the least their misery. Their companions appeared dejected, weighed down with their own sorrows. My heart sickens at the remembrance of that awful scene. As

I came on the crowded deck, I saw directly in front of me one emaciated and worn down by long suffering to a mere skeleton, pining away and apparently near eternity. I looked over into the steerage. The hot, mephitic air almost overpowered me. At the foot of the ladder lay two of the most miserable beings I ever beheld. They were reduced, as the one above named, so that their bones almost protruded from their flesh. Large sores had been worn upon their sides and limbs, as they had been compelled to lay upon the hard plank composing the deck of the vessel. They lay directly under the hatchway, whither they had crawled, apparently to obtain a little purer air. One I thought dead, until by some slight motion of the limbs I discovered his agonies were not yet ended. The other lay with his face toward me, and such an expression of unmitigated anguish I never before saw. I cannot banish the horrid picture. These were not isolated cases, but as they were those that were first noticed they made, perhaps, a stronger impression on my mind. In another part of the vessel lay a little boy, pining away, with two others watching over him. They were not brothers, but had been captured from the same place. They had procured a bit of muslin, that had probably been thrown away by some of the crew, and had placed it under his aching head for a pillow. Could you have seen them, I am sure the fountain of feeling would have been broken up, and the tears would have forced themselves from their hiding place. For the fourteen days that the vessel had been under the charge of the present commander, they had been assiduous in their care: one or the other of them attending on him constantly, and keeping watch alternately at night for this purpose. Oh! if I could portray the

scene as I saw it; could I present it to your imagination, without any coloring, as it was actually presented to my view, your blood would chill in your veins. Five had been thrown over, dead, this morning, and many more were apparently just expiring. And yet they tell me this is comparatively nothing; and I should judge so, if the statement of the captured captain can be relied on. He says that they left some 400 or 500 more at the factory, that he had intended to have taken with him on the same vessel, but was prevented by the proximity of an English cruiser.

W. B. HOYT.

MEETING CALLED ON THE ARRIVAL OF
THE "PONS." NO. 1.

At a special meeting of some of the members of the Liberia Annual Conference, on the 15th of December, called by the Rev. John B. Benham, Superintendent of the Liberia Mission, at the residence of the Rev. A. D. Williams, to take into consideration *what ought to be done by our mission* for the re-captured Africans arriving in this port on the 14th inst., in the barque Pons, of Philadelphia, the following persons were present:—Rev. John B. Benham, Rev. A. D. Williams, Rev. B. R. Wilson, Rev. E. Johnson, Rev. H. B. Matthews, Rev. A. F. Russell, Rev. W. B. Hoyt, Rev. W. B. Williams, Rev. F. Burns, and Dr. J. W. Lugenbeel, U. S. Agent for re-captured Africans.

The Rev. B. R. Wilson was called to the chair, and F. Burns appointed secretary. The Rev. John B. Benham stated the object of the meeting. After a variety of remarks from different individuals, all concurring in the opinion that the unexpected and providential arrival of these unfortunate human beings in such a large number—their being offered to us—their appeal to and claim upon the sympathies of the Church—and the

high degree of probability that they might be made a blessing to Africa, if they could be taken into our mission schools, called upon us to make an extra effort for their relief and assistance—the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:—

1st. In view of the providential arrival of the re-captured Africans in the barque Pons—their being offered to us—their appeal to our sympathies and benevolence as a mission, and the strong probability that they could be more permanently secured to our schools than those obtained immediately about us; therefore—

Resolved, That we recommend to the Superintendent of the Liberia Mission to take 100 of them under the patronage of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

2d. *Resolved*, That we open a subscription on the spot to assist in defraying the increased expenses that such action will entail upon the ordinary expenditures of this mission.

SUBSCRIPTIONS.

J. B. Benham	-	-	\$20 00
B. R. Wilson	-	-	20 00
A. D. Williams	-	-	20 00
W. B. Hoyt	-	-	20 00
A. F. Russell	-	-	20 00
E. Johnson	-	-	20 00
F. Burns	-	-	10 00
H. B. Matthews	-	-	5 00

\$135 00

These subscriptions may all be considered as paid down.

3d. *Resolved*, That in view of this unexpectedly arising exigency, we recommend that our Superintendent lay the whole subject before our Board and the Christian public, by the earliest opportunity.

4th. *Resolved*, That we recommend the Superintendent to take of the re-captives, of both sexes, between the ages of ten and seventeen years old, if practicable.

5th. *Resolved*, That a committee of three be appointed to designate the number that shall be appropriated to each of our mission schools. A. D. Williams, E. Johnson, and B. R. Wilson, were duly elected to serve on this committee.

6th. *Resolved*, That the editor of Africa's Luminary be requested to publish the proceedings of this meeting.

7th. *Resolved*, That we adjourn to meet again on Wednesday afternoon at 4 o'clock. Prayer by the chairman of the meeting.

B. R. WILSON,
Presid't.

F. BURNS, *Sec'y.*

Dec. 15, 1845.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE REV.
J. B. BENHAM.

MONROVIA, Dec. 17, 1845.

Dear Brother Burns:—As it has been thought advisable to issue a circular, for the purpose of giving our friends in Christendom, and especially in the United States of America, a few interesting and important facts, I have requested all connected with our mission to prepare something as soon as practicable for that purpose.

Having on our hands *one hundred* re-captured Africans, besides various cares connected with commencing anew, house-keeping, &c., &c., leaves Mrs. B. and myself little leisure for writing; however, I will endeavor to furnish you with a few particulars.

Last Sabbath evening, intelligence was received at the mission house that Captain Bell, of the African squadron, had captured a barque at the leeward, about 200 miles out from Congo, having on board 900 slaves—that they were then in the harbor, and were to be committed to Dr. J. W. Lugenbeel, U. S. Agent for re-captured Africans, for apprenticeship in the colony. This, as

might be expected, awakened an intense interest, especially among the missionaries: such a circumstance not having occurred before here for years, and was to them altogether new and unexpected.

This will furnish us with an opportunity of obtaining children for our mission schools, who will, in all probability, be permanently connected with them until they shall have arrived at adult age. Thus God may bring good out of this *great evil*.

Dec. 15th. In company with Gov. Roberts, Judge Benedict, Dr. Lugenbeel, and Rev. W. B. Hoyt, I proceeded to the captured vessel, where we saw and heard what beggars all description. From Lieut. Cogdell, having charge of the vessel, we learned that when she was first seen she raised American colors, under the impression that the vessel in chase was a British cruiser; but discovering her mistake, immediately hoisted the Portuguese flag. On boarding her and demanding of the captain his papers, he replied—"I have thrown them overboard." "What is your cargo?" "About 900 slaves!" On farther examination, it was found that she had shipped 913, probably between the ages of 8 and 30, embracing 47 girls: that about 20 had died, after being at sea but three days. She had narrowly escaped a British cruiser, and was bound to Rio Janeiro, South America. Her name is "Pons, of Philadelphia." Was that name ever so disgraced before? will it ever be so again!

The lieutenant had been fourteen days coming up, and during that time they had lost about 150. One in a fit of desperation had jumped overboard, as many others probably would have done if they had had the opportunity. Such was the stench that we remained but a few moments on board. Long enough, however, to see something of the indescriba-

ble horrors of the abominable African slave trade! It was supposed that a thermometer would range at 100 or 120 in the hold. Though I did not go down, I saw that with few exceptions they were in a state of entire *nudity*. Several were in a dying condition, and many others were so emaciated that their skin literally cleaved to their bones. Others again had worn their skin through, producing putrid ulcers, which fed swarms of flies.

The sailors pointed me to a group of three little boys, under the bow of the long boat, on deck. One of them was probably eight years of age, and almost in a dying state, and had been pining away for the last six days. Two others, perhaps ten and twelve years of age, were sitting by him, one on either side, watching him with a great deal of apparent sympathy, and administering to him as they were able. They had procured a small quantity of oakum, with which they had made his bed, and a small piece of muslin for his pillow. They did not leave him night or day, and the sailors always found one of them awake. Through an interpreter I commended them for their kindness to the little sufferer, and promised to take them to live with me, and that they should bring with them their sick companion. I gave each a slip of paper with my name, directing them to keep them, so that I might know them when they landed.

The elder boys are brothers, the younger was from the same tribe.

During the night the little sick boy died, as did also several others, and was thrown into the sea. When the brothers arrived near the beach, they plunged into the water (as all the captives were required to do) and washed themselves, but came out with the slips of paper clenched in their hands. One of these we have

named John Wesley, the other David A. Shepherd, and have taken them to educate.

On arriving at the beach, small quantities of biscuit and water were given the sufferers. When it was supposed the danger of depletion was over, water was poured into a log canoe, into which they plunged like hungry pigs into a trough—the stronger faring the best. Near where I sat was a small pool of brackish water, in a state of stagnation, altogether unfit to be drank; but on their discovering it they plunged into it, swallowing its black contents with great avidity.

Several of the citizens succeeded, with threats and whips, finally, in driving them from it. In walking a half a mile along the beach, several of them lay down to die, but were carried along by their suffering companions, or the citizens.

I was greatly at a loss how to act, or how many to take, in view of the scarcity of provisions in the colony, and in the absence of instructions from the Missionary Board. We were unwilling that so favorable an opportunity should pass, for filling up our schools, without improvement. We at first thought of taking forty, as sister Wilkins in her ardor had applied for thirty-three girls. But on further reflection, concluded to call a meeting of the brethren and friends of the mission, for counsel and advice. The result of that meeting will be seen by a reference to the minutes.—(See Doc. Nos. 1 & 2.) To assist in the support of the large number of children received under the care of the mission, \$135 were subscribed at the time; and as our conference is so near at hand, we purpose not offering the subscription again until the anniversary of the Liberia Conference Missionary Society; confidently believing the sum will be increased to \$500, at least.

Agreeably to the recommendation of the meeting, we have taken one hundred of the children, embracing nineteen girls, that being all the girls we could obtain: and appeal to our Missionary Board and the friends of the African Missions generally.

Brethren, shall we appeal in vain? Was there ever a time of greater need? I am instructed "on no account to exceed the appropriation;" and in consequence of the exhausted state of the Treasury, that appropriation is hardly sufficient to meet the current expenses of the year. The ordinary amount required to support and educate a native scholar is \$30 annually. I had a list of 36 names to confer. For these, I conclude I am at liberty to draw on the Treasurer for their support, for one year, at least. But who will support those for whom we select names according to our own discretion? The amount required will be about \$2,000 for one year. Most of them are of such an age that they will require instruction from five to seven years.

Will not some of our friends come forward and make an extra effort? By the advice of all concerned, I have assumed the responsibility of supporting them, until we hear from the Board, or from the persons whose names we have taken the liberty to confer upon them: when we shall determine whether we have them bound to us, by colonial authority, or give them up again to be bound out to others. In that event we shall feel like exclaiming—"If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved."

Here follow the names of the children:—

George Lane, John Seys, Squire Chase, Melville B. Cox, William Hamilton, George Hildt, Edward Wadsworth, Silas Comfort, John A. Roach, Wm. Blanding, Phineas Rice, Wm. B. Hoyt, Wm. Boggs, James

Bates, Willett Street, Wm. Hughes, John Pearsalt, Wm. Foster, Benjamin Clark, Daniel C. Thomas, Jas. E. Evans, Robert J. Boyd, Samuel V. Blake, Nathan W. Williams, Wm. J. Trench, James H. Taft, Henry Moore, Walter Palmer, Gabriel P. Disosway, Stephen Dando, Jabez A. Burton, Henry Smith, Benjamin Griffin, Stephen Olin, Moses C. White, George Landon, Jesse Gardner, William Reddy, Abel Barker, Thomas Bowman, Isaac B. Benham, Nathaniel Hamilton, Horace Agard, Urbane Burrows, John Foy, John Cornish, Marvin Fox, Francis Cokesbury, Philip D. Lipscomb, Edmund Storers Janes, Hugh A. C. Walker, Samuel A. Peach, Thomas Madden, James Donaldson, Simeon Lamb, Lorenzo D. Sherwood, Thomas E. Bond, Eaton Shaw, Elisha Streeter, Wm. F. Farrington, Isaac Jennison, Buel Goodsell, Charles W. Carpenter, Valentine Buck, Joseph Totten, Washington Street, John S. Barn-dollar, David A. Shepherd, Luther Peck, Beverly Waugh, John Wesley, David Creamer, Isaac Cook, Chas. D. Burritt, Philip Bassett, Wm. C. Smith, Davis W. Clark, Amos N. Mulnix, Arad S. Lakin, Joseph Holdich, James W. Lugenbeel, David Terry, Gabriel Hoyt, Julia Olin, Rachel Blanding, Jane D. Clark, Eliza Stopford, Sarah Downs, Charlotte Janes, Acsah Wilkins Disosway, Martha Elizabeth Pennington, Ann Gardner, Elizabeth Hancock, Hannah Bennett, Mary Hoyt, Ann Adelia Bangs, Margaret Clarke, Phoebe Palmer, Emeline Fox, Mary Garrettson, Catherine Donaldson, Eliza Armitage, Charlotte Matthias, Maria Shepherd.

If we can be assisted in the support of these children, we shall have great occasion to hope that a new impulse will be given to the missionary cause in this country. These children speak an entirely different

language from the tribes in this part of Africa, and they are at a distance of many hundred miles from the place of their nativity; and on both these accounts we shall expect they will remain with us until the time for which they shall be bound shall have expired. Every change with them now will be for the better, therefore we may hope for their gratitude and fidelity.

We should be glad, if time would admit of it, to write to all our friends before the captured vessel sails for Philadelphia, but they must be satisfied to receive the circular. We hope if our brethren, the editors, friendly to the object we have in view, judge the matter we communicate of sufficient importance, they will confer a favor by extracting into their columns.

The clothing forwarded from the treasury came very opportunely.

It was a great satisfaction to us to put on clothes made by the fingers of many of our personal friends, in the fields of our former toil.

To enable our brethren and sisters, who may have charge of these re-captured African children, to support and educate them on \$30 a year, it will be necessary to have some farming utensils, such as axes, hoes, bush-hooks, &c. Also cooking utensils, such as pots, kettles, frying-pans, and a variety of tin ware.

Cannot some of our brethren furnish us some of these articles?

Whatever is forwarded to our much esteemed treasurer, Rev. Geo. Lane, will be transmitted duly and faithfully.

I will here add, I have been introduced to the officers of a British brig

since our arrival, who informed us that, since April last, the British squadron on this coast have captured 101 vessels concerned in the slave trade.*

Poor encouragement for slave merchants and masters of slave vessels. I think they had better engage in some honorable and lawful business, or go into perpetual hermitage, and not curse the world longer with their presence.

Yours respectfully

and affectionately,

J. B. BENHAM.

Sup. Lib. Miss. M. E. C.

Monrovia, Dec. 17, 1845.

LETTER FROM MRS. BENHAM.

Dear Brother Burns:—Permit me through your circular to say a word concerning the children which have so recently been re-captured and brought to this colony. I speak particularly of the children because they are under our own immediate observation. Others, much more adequate to the task, have already described the horror and suffering on board the ship, (as far as it can be given,) who were eye-witnesses of the extreme anguish and misery realized by the poor, unfortunate creatures.

Much might be said with regard to the attention of the officers and citizens of this colony, for their promptness in relieving the wants of those who were "ready to perish," and, like the good Samaritan, bound up their wounds and took them to their own homes.

A large proportion of the re-captives were young persons, of both

*The Portuguese captain, now in our town, told one of our citizens that "if the Americans set about capturing slave vessels, it would be dangerous coming to the coast for slaves,"—arguing, it is to be supposed, that the American ensign could in that event afford but a precarious protection to Spanish and Portuguese bottoms engaged in the trade.—EDITOR AFRICA'S LUMINARY.

sexes, between the ages of 8 and 18. Among the number are 47 girls, which are considered a great acquisition by the mission.

You are doubtless aware of the difficulty our missionaries have had in obtaining native girls for our mission schools. The native men are unwilling to have their women and daughters instructed. It is their wish to keep them in ignorance: for they are well aware, should they become enlightened, they would not submit quietly to all the drudgery imposed by their domineering lords. Hence the great difficulty in obtaining them.

We feel grateful to God, that it is the privilege of the Superintendent now to place a goodly number of these unfortunate girls in our mission school at Millsburg, under the superintendence of sister Ann Wilkins, where every attention will be paid to their moral and physical training; and our earnest prayer is that the blessing of God may attend the efforts made by this devoted missionary, and that she may yet see the desire of her soul in the conversion of all the dear children of her charge.

We have taken four children into our family; two to be named, by particular request of the children of the Nazareth M. E. Sunday School, Philadelphia, John Wesley and Charlotte Matthias. The other two are named after the Rev. Mr. Shepherd and lady, of Wilkes Barre, Pa.—David and Maria Shepherd.

The Superintendent has taken the responsibility of selecting about 100 children for the several mission schools; many of whom are now in the mission house and yard. It is truly affecting to see the poor, emaciated creatures, looking up beseechingly for help. And it is gratifying

to us to have it in our power to administer to their necessities and mitigate their sufferings. We have literally clothed and fed them. Never could there have been anything more timely than the boxes of clothing, sent out to us from our own beloved Oneida Conference, and elsewhere. We indeed feel it to be a providential supply. May the Lord reward the donors "an hundred-fold."

And now my dear brethren and sisters, suffer me to beg a continuance of your efforts. We appeal to you, and we are confident it will not be in vain. We feel truly that there is a great weight of responsibility resting upon us. The wants of the children are to be met; they must be educated, clothed and fed. To you, my dear Christian friends, in our own beloved America, we look for help, especially to those of our dear friends with whom we have lived and labored, to assist us in this distant field.

SUSAN H. BENHAM.

Monrovia, Dec. 17, 1845.

NO. 2. MINUTES OF THE ADJOURNED MEETING.

Wednesday, Dec. 17, 1845.

After prayer, the Rev. J. B. Benham was called to the chair, and W. B. Hoyt appointed secretary.

The committee to whom was referred the apportioning of the captives, taken under the care of the mission, to the different stations, reported as follows, (which report was unanimously adopted:)

"The committee to whom was referred the distributing of the boys,* would recommend the postponement of the final decision, until after conference; and would also recommend that the boys be kept by the differ-

* The girls, nineteen in number, are understood to be exclusively at the disposition of the Superintendent.—EDITOR AFRICA'S LUMINARY.

ent brethren until after the above-mentioned time."

A. D. WILLIAMS,
E. JOHNSON,
B. R. WILSON.

Minutes read and approved; after which the meeting adjourned—prayer by the Rev. B. R. Wilson.

J. B. BENHAM,
Presid't.

W. B. HOYT, *Sec'y.*

LETTER FROM MRS. ANN. WILKINS.
MONROVIA, Dec. 15, 1845.

Brother Burns:—Permit me, through the medium of your paper, to say a few words concerning my school, to those kind friends who are anxious for its prosperity, as my present vacation and visit to this place gives me a favorable opportunity for writing, and especially in view of a circumstance just transpired that seems to call for it. Different concurring causes prevented me from having a vacation in June, as was contemplated, but the vacation for the present month is so replete with auspicious incidents as to more than make up for the greater than usual labor, instead of a vacation in June.

1st. The arrival of the three missionaries and their wives happening at a time when I could come and spend some time most agreeably with them, without loss to the school, is to me an unspeakable favor. And next, the opportunity which has just offered of obtaining, in a very unexpected way, a number of scholars for my school, which, added to the seven that I have, will amount to twenty-three. I mention this before giving any account of my school, as it has been, because it is of new occurrence, and dwells most vividly in my thoughts.

Do my friends at a distance already begin to wonder by what means this female school is to be so

suddenly filled up, after more than three and a half years' efforts attended with very little success? Ah! dear friends, my heart sickens and shrinks at the recital of only a few hints that I must give you. As for a full detail of affairs as they have been represented to me by an eye-witness, I must leave that for stouter hearts, if indeed any are to be found stout enough for the task. Would that I could tell you that these children had been obtained by the free, mild and friendly consent of their parents, as has been the case with some that I have already in my school; and that the children themselves came freely and willing, too, as did those: but alas! no: revolting, even horrifying as is the thought, I have got to think of the cruel savage war—the unexpected attack at night—the murder of aged ones and infants—the rough treatment of the savage warriors as they were seizing, binding, and dragging their helpless victims away from their homes to the place of sale at the sea-side;—and last—O, that I could turn away my thoughts and my pen from this scene—the slave ship; the slave ship, more cruel than the savage war. Do you ask what there can be that I view as auspicious in all this? I quickly answer, *nothing* in the cruel war or the more cruel slave ship!—But I think I see an auspicious Providence in causing our Mission Superintendent to be here, and myself to be here at the time that a slave ship has been brought into our harbor, a prize to the U. S. sloop-of-war Yorktown, under the command of Capt. Bell, containing, when brought in, about seven hundred and fifty slaves; out of these, I have felt it my duty to ask for a goodly number to place in my school, that I may have the privilege of teaching them the sacred principles of our holy religion and the arts of civilized life.

Poor creatures! how much they have suffered! It seems to me that it will be delightful to cheer and comfort their minds, and make them feel at home when they shall have been landed, and to administer to their necessities, so as to strengthen their emaciated bodies, as well as raise their dejected spirits.

And now may I hope, that since we have felt it duty to ask for some of these poor creatures, to place them in a situation of improvement, our friends abroad, especially those who have always manifested great interest for Africa, will be prompt in assisting to take care of them by contributing to their support in food and clothing, and books, as all must be well aware that immediate aid is needed. We could not let this opportunity of doing good pass unheeded—surely it would have been sin if we had.—And now, dear friends, brethren and sisters, suffer me to entreat you to cast off some of your superfluities, that you may the more easily relieve the sufferings of your poor fellow creatures. O, who would not like to have these, at the last day, rise up and call them blessed! and to hear the righteous Judge, speaking in their behalf, say to them, “I was naked, and ye clothed me, hungry, and ye fed me, sick and in prison and ye visited and relieved me.” O, *there* may you look for a reward of all your righteous acts and deeds of charity, though we cannot promise you any return in this life: but who that rightly considers the shortness and the changeableness of time, and the duration and immutability of eternity, would not choose to trust the Lord till the great day of reckoning, and then receive from Him a crown of glory that shall never fade away, rather than the gold and silver of this life?

Here will be an opportunity for appropriating many of the names of

friends in America who have requested their names to be given to pupils here; and may we not look for those friends to care especially for their namesakes? Yes, I know we may. The proofs of such regard already given, warrant us to expect an increase of attention now that there is an increase of demand for it.

I have left but little to mention of the present state of my school. I will just give a general view in few words: my school, at the close of the term, consisted of about thirty scholars, in regular attendance; some others came irregularly, whose names I did not record. During the four or five months of sister Moore's ill health, I had from fifty to fifty-eight. They have been progressing as well as, perhaps, we might expect in the different branches of orthography, reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, and grammar. The native children all can read, with help and spelling, in the Bible.

In conclusion let me ask the prayers as well as pecuniary aid of Christian friends, for myself and my school.

A. WILKINS.

CONCLUSION.

No human being can have read the above affecting communications without feeling intensely for the subjects of them—the *re-captives*. Man, unhardened man, is made susceptible of powerful sympathy in the oppression and sufferings of his fellows, when the tale of their woes is brought from credible sources to his ear. Not to do so, when the truth is transmitted to his understanding and heart, but to remain unmoved, with his hand and his purse unopened, argues a state of moral feeling, of mental induration, of which no one ought to be envious.

Professed lovers of Africa and the Liberia Mission! have you enquired

for motive, for moving incident, to inspire you with and prompt you to benevolence towards Africa? your inquiries ought now to be considered at an end. Have you asked for proper subjects of your benevolence? you need ask no more. God, in his providence, has thrown upon their own shores, but within the reach of your liberality, upwards of 700 poor, emaciated, destitute human beings. They look up imploringly to the Christian world for an avengement of their wrongs. But the weapons of your warfare should not be carnal; you are not to render evil for evil.

The *condition*—the physical, mental and spiritual condition—of the sufferers, asks you for the means with which they may be clothed and fed: it asks you for schools, for teachers, and for the BIBLE. What say you? Will you, through the above letters, come and look on their wants, and then pass on, leaving them to the charity and benevolence of others? The resolution of this question rests with you, but the final account with God. Act with decision and promptness, holding that account in view.

Despatches from Liberia.

MONROVIA, LIBERIA,
February 10, 1846.

REV. AND DEAR SIR:—I embrace the opportunity afforded by the return of the brig "Kent" to Baltimore, to forward you a short letter. By the barque "Pons," which sailed from this port about the 1st ult., I sent you a hastily written sheet, in which I acknowledged the receipt of your two last letters to me.

During the last two months, my time has been very much occupied, except when I have been obliged to be compelled to rest. As you may readily suppose, the heavy weight of care and responsibility which devolved on me by the arrival of the immigrants by the "Rock," and the re-captured Africans by the "Pons," was almost too much for me to bear. But, with the blessing of a kind Providence, I am still alive; and, with the assistance of my students, I have been able to get along, in the discharge of my duties, much more successfully than I thought I should. I have, however, suffered very much, in consequence of having been necessarily much exposed and fatigued, during the uncommonly hot and dry weather which we have had for the last two months.

In consequence of my feeble state of health, I have not been able to give as much attention to the late immigrants as I desired, especially to those who were sent up the river, soon after their arrival. But they have had every attention which was necessary; and the bill of mortality will show that they have got along as well, perhaps, in their situation, as any other company who were ever sent to the colony. Three of those who were located on the S. P. R. river, soon after they arrived—two-thirds of the whole number—have been under the care of some of my students. Mr. James S. Smith, who has been with them all the

time, and whose success with them, so far, has greatly exceeded my expectations: only two having died, an aged man and a young infant; notwithstanding, in addition to the ordinary concomitants of the fever, most of them were very much troubled with diarrhoea, in consequence, principally, of the use of bad water—it being difficult at this season of the year always to procure good water, especially at the settlements up the river. I have not been able to visit them more than four or five times.

Perhaps it may appear a little like egotism for me to praise my own students, but I think I may truly say, that Mr. Smith possesses more remarkable talents for the practice of medicine, than any other young man whom I ever knew. His judgment is uncommonly good, and he is very studious, observant, and attentive. Mr. Roberts, however, will make the better surgeon. He has already performed several important surgical operations. Only a few days ago, I saw him amputate the leg of a man, who had received a gunshot wound in the calf. He performed every part of the operation himself—took the limb off about four inches below the knee; and I do not hesitate to assert, that I believe an amputation was never before more neatly performed, in Liberia.

Nearly all the late immigrants have been, more or less, sick; some very sick; and a few of them are still complaining. Six, in all, have died; one of whom was a very aged woman, and one a young unmarried female, who obstinately refused to eat or drink any thing, or to take any medicine, in consequence of her condition and delirium, produced by the development of her unfortunate situation—in plain language, an abortion. One of the other four was a man, who might have lived if he had not resolved to die.

have disposed of all the re-captured Africans by the "Pons;" and they have been apprenticed by the Probate Court, under the provisions of a special act passed at the late session of the Legislature, except seventeen of them, the head men; whom I placed at New Georgia, under the care of some of their countrymen, the Congoes, who faithfully promised to take care of them, until they shall be able to take care of themselves. About sixty-five, in all, have died, since they arrived. Many of those who were very much emaciated when I received them, are now fine, healthy-looking boys; and some of them have already made astonishing progress in acquiring a knowledge of the English language.

Yours truly,
J. W. LUGENBEEL.

REV. W. McLAIR,
Sec'y A. C. S.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
Monrovia, Feb. 10, 1846.

SIR:—By the brig Kent from Baltimore, which arrived here on the 11th ultimo, I received your favor of the 13th November.

The immigrants by the Roanoke are doing well; most of them, under the skilful treatment of Dr. Lugeneel, have passed safely through the acclimating process, and are making themselves comfortable on their farms.

I have the honor herewith to transmit to you the minutes of the last session of the Legislature. The subject of the nationality and independence of Liberia was freely discussed, and has been deferred, as you will find, by a resolution passed January 7, until further communications shall be received from the Board on the subject, when an extra session will be convened. I send you also a printed copy of the acts passed at the last session of the Legislature.

You will be pleased to find that the Legislature took a decided stand against the sale of ardent spirits in the colony. The 7th section of an act regulating commerce and revenue, imposes such restriction on dealers in spirituous liquors as will, in my opinion, amount almost to a prohibition.

You will receive by this vessel accounts from the Colonial Warehouse for the quarter ending 31st December last. General Lewis will write to you fully respecting the increased amount of business he has to attend to on account of the U. S. Government; within the last few months, it has so increased as to allow him but little time to attend to any thing else; indeed, he thinks it impossible for him to discharge properly the duties without more help. This, at present, cannot be afforded with the small amount received from the government for the use of the store and the services of a store-keeper.

In my last letter I informed you that I would have the power of attorney from the Rox family executed a power of attorney from the U. S. Sup York

town; but on his return to this place from the leeward, he informed me his ship was ordered to the Mediterranean, and that he would not probably be in the United States till late in 1847, consequently his attestation was not obtained. Herewith you will receive a second power of attorney, with a statement from the parties in proof of their identity, executed in presence of Captain Gavet, of the brig Kent of Baltimore. Should this document not prove satisfactory to the court, I have but little hope of their ever getting their money. I am, however, authorized to say to you, that should this second effort prove unsuccessful, they will defray the expense of any one who will come to Liberia to establish their identity.

The sloop Economy sailed on the 9th ultimo, with a full and suitable cargo of merchandise, in charge of two commissioners, who are authorized to contract, if possible, for all the unpurchased territory lying between Grand Bassa Point and Grand Cesters. Since their departure I have not heard directly from them, but have every reason to believe that they are succeeding pretty well. I will give you the earliest information of their success.

I have selected a site on the north bank of the St. Paul's river, above Caldwell, for the Kentucky emigrants, and will do all in our power to have our arrangements perfected, so as to be able to locate them immediately on their farms.

I hope by this opportunity to be able to send you a copy of the treaty concluded between the chiefs of Grand Cape Mount and the British Government, for the suppression of the slave trade. Captain Bishorn, of Her Majesty's brig Leone, established a depot two miles and pointed to French men with a copy of the instrument, which I have received. The British Government, however, does not claim the territory, and I do not wish any interference under the disadvantages of Mr. Cnot, with the assistance and influence of Mr. Seaman.

Cannot the Government be induced to give us a few copies of U. S. soldiers? They are much needed in some of our frontier settlements; second-hand arms would answer our purpose. It is no matter of regret, that we are not able to furnish the last immigrants with sufficient arms to protect themselves, in the event of any invasion upon them by the natives. The Kentucky emigrants, if placed by themselves, will also require such protection.

Will you not renew your application for bounty? There we have will soon be unfit for use. Surely it is not the intention of the U. S. Government to abandon us and their own interests on this coast.

I am, dear Sir, respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
J. J. ROBERTS.

REV. W. McLAIR,

Sec'y A. C. S.

Washington City

Governor Roberts' Annual Message.

To the honorable, the members of the
Legislature :—

GENTLEMEN :—At the commencement of another session of the Legislature, it becomes my duty to inform you of the state of public affairs—to communicate to you what may have occurred during the past year, and to recommend for your consideration such measures as appear to me to be expedient or necessary, and which shall be calculated to increase the happiness of our fellow citizens, and advance the prosperity of our common country.

I cannot refrain, gentlemen, from reminding you how signally Almighty God has hitherto prospered us, and with what success all our efforts have been crowned. It is pleasing to look upon the past history of these colonies, and to contemplate the goodness of an overruling Providence in our behalf. From the first settlement of that little band of patriots, who, in 1822, in search of a country and a home, a place where they might enjoy the blessings of political freedom, the privileges of civil liberty, and that social intercourse for which man is so happily constituted—established themselves on this barbarous coast, under circumstances the most embarrassing and discouraging, far from the haunts of civilized man—the ruthless slave trader excepted—unaided and unprotected by any civilized government, surrounded by barbarous and savage tribes, warlike and treacherous in their intercourse with strangers; and under the influence of the more pernicious slave dealer. Still they hoped by a strict neutrality to cultivate the friendship of the natives; and, if possible, to fix an asylum for themselves and their children, and found here a free, sovereign and independent state. But, notwithstanding

every effort on their part to maintain a good understanding with their savage neighbors, they soon found themselves surrounded with difficulties of the most appalling character. The detestable slavers, fearing for the success and continuance of their vile traffic, should a Christian colony be established here, used every art in their power to alienate the affections of the natives, and to excite them to actual hostilities against the colony; in which they succeeded too well. And the colonists soon found themselves involved in a cruel and unnatural war; and, to all human appearance, a war of extermination; rapine and murder stained their hills in the face, and to avert the impending storm seemed impossible; a mere handful of isolated beings opposed to a host of mercenary savages—their ruin appeared inevitable. God, however, had ordained it otherwise; and by a special interposition of His providence, delivered them from their perilous situation. And if any people under Heaven have cause to render up thanks to the Great Governor of the universe, for parental care and protection extended to them in all the trials and difficulties to which they have been, from time to time, exposed, it is certainly the people of Liberia. Through the whole course of their eventful career, the superintendence of an overruling Providence, in their behalf, has been visibly visible. Under the fostering care of the American Colonization Society, the colony has continued to increase in population, intelligence, wealth and importance; “a little one has become a thousand,” and is now attracting the attention of the civilized world. It therefore becomes us, in entering once more upon the duties of legislation, humbly to acknowledge our dependence upon Him, who is infinite in wisdom

and power, as our guide and protector; and to implore a continuance of His watchfulness over the affairs of these colonies.

We have continued cause for the expression of our gratitude to Almighty God, that another year finds us in the enjoyment of the blessings of peace, law, order and religion; that the health of our fellow citizens has been preserved; that the earth has yielded abundant fruits to the labors of the husbandman; that, notwithstanding the interruptions to trade, new activity has been imparted to commerce; and that every department of the government seems to be going on well and prosperously, excepting only the unsettled state of our affairs in regard to the jurisdiction of the colony, and the restrictions imposed by Great Britain, denying to us the power to exercise sovereign and independent rights.

At present, this subject is every where engaging public attention; and you, gentlemen, have met together at a most interesting period. The position assumed by Great Britain in regard to these colonies, places us in a situation both singular and portentous; and which calls, with peculiar importunity, not less for a disposition on your part to unite in all those measures on which the safety and prosperity of these colonies depend, than for the exercise of that wisdom and firmness that have hitherto marked your deliberations on all grave and important subjects connected with the public weal.

The documents containing the correspondence relative to the jurisdiction of this government over certain territory in Grand Bassa country, were laid before the Legislature, at its last session. And, in view of the assurances, communicated by Commodore Jones, of Her Majesty's ship "Penelope," of the deep interest which is felt in Great

Britain for the success of every enterprise, which has for its object the civilization and welfare of Africa, and (certainly none has greater claim than the American Colonization Society,) the deep sympathy entertained for this infant colony, and the hope that the prosperity of Liberia may not in any way be impeded;—I earnestly hoped that, before this time, these unpleasant difficulties would have been amicably arranged and settled, and the influence and prosperity of the colony, in that quarter, no longer retarded. In this, however, I have been painfully disappointed; and it is matter of deep regret, that during the past year new difficulties, of a more dangerous and alarming character, have arisen.

Gentlemen, it is with extreme regret that I find myself called upon to communicate to you the circumstance of a most unrighteous and unwarrantable aggression, committed by one of Her Britannic Majesty's cruisers on the commerce of these colonies.

In April last, a cutter from Her Majesty's brig "Lily," Captain Newton, entered the harbor of Grand Bassa, and in the face of a number of the citizens of that place, seized the colonial schooner "John Seys," owned by S. A. Benson, of Bassa Cove; and, without communicating with the shore, proceeded to sea with the vessel. The boat was recognized by the spectators as belonging to Her Majesty's service, but how to account for this strange and mysterious proceeding no one could possibly divine; why they should seize a colonial vessel, in our own waters, lying a short distance from the shore, receiving cargo of trade goods under the immediate inspection of the collector of the port, with regular papers on board, and the colonial flag flying—was truly unaccountable.

Many conjectures were started—some supposed she had been seized in consequence of the detention of

some goods, a few days before, by the collector, to secure the harbor dues of an English vessel, which the supercargo had refused to pay; others thought it impossible that she had been seized on any such pretense—as no complaint had been made to the authorities, and that the property of private individuals would not be seized for the acts of public officers. In a few days, however, it was announced, not officially, that she had been seized on suspicion of being engaged in the slave trade and had been ordered to Sierra Leone for adjudication. I have since learned, that after a critical examination before the Vice Admiralty Court at Sierra Leone, she has been fully acquitted. But what is exceedingly remarkable, by some fiction of law unprecedented in the annals of admiralty proceedings, totally inconsistent with the rules laid down by Mr. Brown, an eminent lawyer, and perhaps the ablest writer on admiralty proceedings in England, the claimant is required to pay the captor's costs. Can any thing be more unjust and oppressive, to seize a man's property, subject him to a loss of several thousand dollars by crippling his operations, accuse him of a most heinous crime, and then, notwithstanding the total absence of all proof to sustain the charge, he should be required to pay his accuser's costs, amounting to upwards of ten hundred dollars. This Mr. Benson promptly, and in my opinion very properly, refused to pay.

It is rumored, that her captors have assumed the position, that the Liberia settlers do not possess sovereign and independent rights; therefore are not authorized to establish a national flag; and that the "John Seys" is now detained on the grounds of her want of national character. Now, if this be true—which I am loth to believe—it shows conclusively, that the real cause which led to

the seizure of that vessel, has not been avowed. The subject, however has been fully and formally represented to Her Majesty's government, where I have no doubt it will receive attention, and that Mr. Benson will obtain full satisfaction and indemnification for the heavy losses he has sustained. Truly, gentlemen, this whole affair is perfectly outrageous, and has operated more powerfully to retard the influence and prosperity of these colonies, than any thing we have hitherto been called to suffer; and I can only recommend a patient endurance and a firm reliance on Him, who by his own hand has planted us here, and who, I firmly believe, will protect and sustain these colonies, and will deliver them from the machinations of wicked and designing men. It is gratifying, however, that notwithstanding we have suffered much, in consequence of the improper interference of a few worthless traders, and some disrespect and even oppression from another quarter, still, in the general, our intercourse with British officers has been of the most friendly character, and, with one or two exceptions, they have uniformly treated us kindly and respectfully; and I believe many of them feel a lively interest in the success and prosperity of these colonies, and would not be guilty of any conduct calculated to hinder or impede their progress. I confess, gentlemen, that I am too firmly persuaded in favor of the philanthropy, magnanimity and benevolence of the British people, to entertain for a moment the idea—that the improper interference of British officers toward these colonies will be sanctioned or tolerated by the British Government. It is totally inconsistent with her strong professions of sympathy and friendship for the colored race in general, and for Africa in particular. Her statesmen and naval officers have united in the opinion, that the civili-

zation and christianization of Africa herself, is the only effectual remedy for the gigantic horrors of the slave trade:—and what means, I would ask, is better calculated to effect this great object, than Christian colonies planted along this coast? This colony, though in the infancy of its existence, has already done more to suppress that infamous traffic than all the armed squadrons that have been sent to this coast—and if not interrupted, it promises to do more to civilize and christianize Africa, than is now being done by the whole civilized world besides. How then can we suppose that Great Britain will pursue a policy so utterly destructive to our dearest and fondest hopes? No, gentlemen, such a course would place the theories and principles of British philanthropy and benevolence, to the colored race, in a very rare light indeed. Commodore Jones, in an official communication, has assured us “that the rights of property on this coast, as they may appear to be acquired by purchase, will be fully recognized,”—this is all we ask—our claim to the territory of Grand Bassa, has never been questioned: the natives received a fair and full compensation for the lands—and we have now established there three settlements numbering several thousand American settlers, and no less than ten thousand of the aboriginal inhabitants who have incorporated themselves with the colonists, and are now citizens of Liberia. What then can possibly justify Captain Newton in the seizure of a colonial vessel in her own waters? No principle in national law, I presume, is better understood than this—that the banks of the sea belong to the people that possess the country of which it is a part, and that the ports and harbors are manifestly a dependence, and even a part of the country—and, consequently, are the property of the nation: this principle I hold

to be incontrovertible. If so, then, Captain Newton, with as much propriety, might have landed a force at the settlements of Edina and Bassa Cove, or even at Monrovia, and entered the dwellings and ware-houses of the citizens, and seized property deposited there, as to have entered the harbor of Grand Bassa, under any pretense whatsoever, and seized a colonial vessel. But we are told that Liberia is not a recognized state—therefore not entitled to the consideration and respect of foreign nations. This doctrine you remember, gentlemen, is held by Commodore Jones, in that memorable communication in which he remarks—founded evidently upon the relations subsisting between these colonies and the American Colonization Society—“that the rights of imposing customs and limiting the trade of foreigners by restrictions, are sovereign rights which can only be exercised by sovereign, independent states within their own recognized borders and dominions, and this description does not yet apply to Liberia, which is not recognized as a subsisting state, even by the government of the country from which its settlers have emigrated.” You are aware that this subject has been agitating the public mind, now for more than twelve months, and has been the theme of many warm and animated discussions throughout the commonwealth. The Legislature, at its last session, submitted the question to the consideration of the Board of Directors of the Colonization Society. The Society, at its annual meeting, in January last, adopted certain resolutions—which will be laid before you—referring the whole matter (they could do nothing more) to the citizens of Liberia, leaving it with them to determine whether, in their opinion, the time has arrived to change their relations with the Society. If so, they will interpose no objections, nor indeed could they

Now, how far Commodore Jones' remarks will apply to Liberia, is a matter of some consideration. For my own part, I am decidedly of opinion, that the Commonwealth of Liberia, notwithstanding its connection with the Colonization Society, is a sovereign, independent state—fully competent to exercise the powers of government—certainly such as pertain to its municipal regulations—those of levying and imposing duties on imports, and regulating the trade of foreigners within its own purchased dominions.

That the government of Liberia is anomalous, bearing little or no analogy to any other, either ancient or modern—and to foreigners exceedingly paradoxical—may be true; but at the same time, it does appear to me, that by the exercise of a little sober reflection, this seeming paradox can be easily reconciled. The humane and benevolent objects of the Colonization Society in establishing and fostering these colonies, are well known to all civilized nations; and, perhaps, nowhere better understood than in England. When the scheme of African colonization was first conceived, this difficulty met the Society at the very threshold. As an association of private individuals, they knew well that they could not take upon themselves the power of government; but to organize a government was absolutely necessary; and, as the emigrants were totally inexperienced in such matters, it was not expedient for them, nor in fact did they wish, unaided, to assume the responsibility. A line of distinction, however, was readily drawn. In consideration of certain aid granted to the colonists by the Society, the citizens of Liberia, as an infant republic, entered into a league or compact with the Society, confiding to them the management of certain external concerns; reserving to the government of the co-

lony whatever regarded its internal or municipal affairs.

In this, no surrender of sovereignty, as a body politic, was ever contemplated by the Liberians, or so understood by the Society. Indeed it was impossible in the very nature of things. Such a surrender, to a company of private individuals, not possessing political power, would in itself have been a nullity. The covenant was only in the nature of a treaty or agreement, which had no other sanction than the will of the parties; and admitted of no coercive power to enforce obedience. Each member of the compact could expound its meaning, and should the government of Liberia differ with the Society about the construction of any clause, there is no umpire but the citizens of these colonies, who in good faith, may at pleasure dissolve that compact. This could not be the case if this colony was a dependence, in the legal acceptance of that phrase. The Society can advise, but it can execute nothing; all power of government is vested in the people here. But what seems most difficult to be understood in our organization, and which is constantly seized upon as a proof of the dependence of Liberia is, that the chief executive officer of the government is appointed and paid by the Colonization Society; and that all laws enacted by the Liberian Legislature, shall be subject to a revocation of the Society. That an arrangement so novel and without precedent should, in its operations, experience some jarrings, is not surprising; nor is it a matter of much astonishment that foreigners, at first view, should consider it complicated and perplexing. In fact it is not fully understood by many of our own citizens. For my own part, I really cannot see anything in the arrangement so incomprehensible; nor do I believe that others, if they will examine the subject closely, will

find anything in it incompatible with the sovereignty of Liberia.

Immediately on landing upon these shores, after securing from the aboriginal inhabitants a title to the lands, effected through the benevolent aid and instrumentality of the Colonization Society, and held by them in trust for the government about to be established. The first company of immigrants formed themselves into a body politic, susceptible of obligations and laws—organized a government regular in all its parts, without any political dependence on foreign power. But distrustful of their own competency to carry out fully the ends of good government, they entered into an agreement, which is incorporated into the statutes of the commonwealth, accepting the assistance of an officer, to be appointed and paid by the Colonization Society, to aid them in the administration of government; and, at the same time, feeling themselves unqualified to discharge properly the duties of legislation, and wishing to guard against the danger of enforcing unjust and oppressive laws, subversive of the rights and liberties of the people, which they feared might prove destructive to their future hopes, they agreed to submit all laws by them enacted to the approval of the Colonization Society. And what, I ask, is there in this arrangement to destroy, or in any way impair, the sovereignty of Liberia? It is well known that the Society could originate no laws, much less enforce obedience. They could recommend measures, but it remained for the people of Liberia, if they thought proper, to adopt them. Nor was this agreement expected to continue longer than the people of these colonies felt themselves in need of such aid. I presume it will be conceded by all, that every nation may order the affairs of their own government according to their own

pleasure; nor will it be denied, that the powers of every country are regulated by the general law, to which all have consented; and that every people are, by God and nature, left to the liberty of regulating those matters according to their own prudence or convenience. Upon these fundamental principles, the people of Liberia thought proper to delegate certain powers to the American Colonization Society; I therefore insist, it is their own business, and no other government has any right to interfere with it.

What, may I enquire, induced that little band of patriots, who composed the ship Elizabeth's company—the pioneers in this noble enterprise, to expatriate themselves—to abandon forever the land of their nativity—and to establish themselves on this distant coast, but to found here a state, a free, sovereign and independent state, where they could enjoy equal laws and the privileges of civil and religious liberty?

And, gentlemen, were not you, and the thousands of our fellow citizens who have followed them, actuated by the same feelings of independence and love of freedom?—Oppressed and denied the privileges of free men in the United States, you sought an asylum here; here you expected to find in operation a government, the germ of a free republic: and I maintain, we have not been disappointed.

For more than twenty years, the commonwealth of Liberia, regularly organized, with legislative, executive and judicial departments, has been governing itself by its own authority and laws; laws just and equal, protecting alike the property of strangers and citizens. British subjects have availed themselves of the protection guaranteed to foreigners by our laws; they have sought and obtained redress in the tribunals of the colony—and will they now turn upon us, and

say those proceedings were extra judicial? That the officers of the colony, during this long period of time, have been sitting in judgment and passing sentence, divested of judicial power, disrobed of official authority? This, indeed, would be placing us in no very enviable position. For, on that supposition, every instance of capital punishment that has taken place in the colony has been a murder—every arrest an unlawful assault—every imprisonment a false imprisonment—and every seizure of property, to enforce the payment of debt, a trespass. Nor could any grant or declaration of independence exert a retrospective influence, and make these acts to have been legal. I am happy, however, in the conviction that the officers of this government have not so far committed themselves.

I maintain, that they have been acting solely upon the authority and laws of the commonwealth of Liberia, as an independent state—not using the sovereignty of any other state or people, for the purposes of civil government: as Sierra Leone, for instance, uses British sovereignty for that purpose.

For more than twenty years the flag of Liberia has been floating upon every breeze along our coast, known and respected by the armed vessels of every nation—and until now, excepting the occasional violence of slavers and pirates, has protected our little marine from outrage. A new discovery, however, has been made—that Liberia is not a sovereign, independent state, therefore her ports and harbors may be violated, and her commerce destroyed with impunity.

No member of this community can remain indifferent at this critical crisis. The alleged want of sovereignty of this commonwealth, in consequence of its connection with the American Colonization Society,

is a subject of deep interest, and I am happy to find that our citizens are fully awake to its importance, and have not been backward in expressing their opinions freely. On the one hand, it is strongly urged, that an immediate change in our relations with the American Colonization Society, and a formal declaration of independence, are absolutely necessary to relieve us from our present embarrassments: on the other, it is strenuously insisted such a course would be premature and inexpedient. So far as independence is concerned, that is, to commence now, I am decidedly of opinion that no action is necessary. Nothing will meet our wants but an acknowledgment that Liberia has been an independent state from the beginning: fully authorized to administer civil government, which is a part of sovereignty, and which, upon all sound principles of national law, cannot be denied to her—for the dependence of these colonies upon the American Colonization Society, can only be viewed as a pecuniary, and not a political dependence.

But we are told that "Liberia is not recognized as a subsisting state, even by the government of the country from which its settlers have emigrated:" this is certainly true. But what, may I inquire, has our recognition, by that or any other government, to do with the sovereignty of Liberia as an independent state?

This colony, as is well known, never was a dependence of the United States—nor do its citizens owe any allegiance to that government—certainly none on the grounds of having emigrated from that country. For in the United States the right of expatriation has been solemnly recognized by the supreme judicial authority of the government.

I know that the ideas of gentlemen of the first rank in our community in point of understanding and

ability, have been somewhat confused on this subject of independence. We have associated the idea, that colonies have always commenced their existence in a state of political subjection to, and dependence on, their mother country: and for that reason, could not be sovereign states, nor exercise the powers of sovereignty till that dependence terminated. Hence we often talk as if Liberia needed to go through the same operation. But Liberia never was such a colony: she never was in that state of political dependence; and, therefore, needs no such process in order to become a sovereign state. Were this a revolting province or colony, the case would be different: then, as Mr. Wheaton remarks, "until the independence of the new state has been acknowledged, either by the foreign state where its sovereignty is drawn in question, or by the government of the country of which it was before a province, courts of justice and private individuals are bound to consider the ancient state of things as remaining unaltered." But you perceive, gentlemen, this does not apply to Liberia in any respect, which is not a province of any government in Africa, nor a dependence on any foreign state. We are here a society of men holding no allegiance to any other government—"united together to procure our mutual safety and advantage," under a government emphatically our own—conducting our own affairs and interests—deliberating and taking resolutions in common," and as such are entitled to consideration and respect. Mr. Vattel says:—"Since men are naturally equal, and their rights and obligations are the same as proceeding from nature, nations composed of men, considered as so many free persons living together in the state of nature, are naturally equal, and receive from nature the same obligations and rights. Power or weak-

ness does not in this respect produce any difference. A dwarf is as much a man as a giant—a small republic is as much a sovereign state as the most powerful kingdom."

It would be exceedingly gratifying to me, gentlemen, to be able to give you some idea of the state of public feeling in England, in regard to these colonies—but I have no data upon which to found any correct opinion. I question, however, whether we are fully informed respecting the real causes which have led to our present difficulties. I cannot believe that the British people are ignorant of the relation subsisting between these colonies and the American Colonization Society—they are too familiar with the circumstances which induced us to come to this country—and with the benevolent and philanthropic objects of that Society—an institution standing alone—founded by the United States—not even chartered by their government—only sustained by the voluntary contributions of a Christian public.

According to agreement, the Society has furnished us annually certain pecuniary aid—in consideration of which, it is understood, that so long as this agreement may continue, the citizens of Liberia will not enter into any league or compact with foreign nations. Under this arrangement, these colonies, for twenty-five years, have been steadily advancing—their progress, it is true, has not been very rapid—nor, indeed, under the circumstances, could it be expected. The people of Liberia have had to contend with difficulties unknown to any other people—but with a noble fortitude, grappling manfully with them, they determined to overcome, or die in the struggle—and, under God, they have succeeded beyond the most sanguine expectations of their warmest friends. Still we are but a weak and almost defenceless community—without ade-

quate resources—with a revenue barely sufficient to meet the most pressing demands of government. At this crisis, we are called upon—in consequence of the position assumed by Great Britain in regard to the sovereignty of Liberia—to consider the propriety of changing our relations with the American Colonization Society.

That some measures should be adopted, which may possibly relieve us from our present embarrassments, is very clear—but how far it is necessary to change our relations with the Colonization Society, for that purpose, is matter of deep consideration.

I have considered this subject, gentlemen, with all possible attention, and with all the judgment I could possibly exercise on the occasion—and I am sure, with all the candor and impartiality which becomes an enquirer after truth; but, I confess, I have not been able to discover any just grounds for the assertion contended for; that Liberia is not a sovereign, independent state. And, in my opinion, it only remains for the Government of Liberia, by a formal act, to announce her independence—that she now is, and always has been, a sovereign, independent state—and that documents of this proceeding, duly certified by the Colonization Society, be presented to the British, as well as other governments, and by that means obtain, from Great Britain and other powers, a just and formal recognition of the Government of Liberia. If this can be effected, it will at once place the sovereignty of Liberia beyond question, and the people of these colonies in a position to negotiate with foreign powers; and, perhaps, as some gentlemen would persuade us, we may be able to obtain means to carry out more effectually the objects of government, and to develop more speedily and effectually the vast resources of this unexplored country.

Gentlemen, in entering upon this subject the greatest caution should be observed—let us enter into no measures hastily or unadvisedly—let every step be well considered—for, however lightly some may be disposed to treat this subject, it is one of vital importance to the future happiness of the people of Liberia. We should remember, with feelings of deep gratitude, the obligations we are under to the Colonization Society—they have made us what we are, and they are still deeply interested in our welfare—and I firmly believe they will place no obstructions in the way of our future advancement and final success.

It becomes us, therefore, to be careful to conduct our affairs in such a manner as will secure to us a continuance of their co-operation and assistance. It will rest with you, gentlemen, to decide on the course to be adopted to meet this pressing exigency. Coming, as you do, from all parts of the commonwealth, you must, of course, be familiar with the views and sentiments of our fellow citizens, in regard to the independence and nationality of Liberia; and in forming your decision, I feel that you will, with an unerring regard to the rights of your constituents, weigh and compare every consideration connected with this important subject, and will adopt such measures as will secure to Liberia what she has already attained, and as will be best calculated to advance the interest of her citizens. Gentlemen, I am happy to be able to inform you, that our relations with the surrounding native tribes—excepting only a little restlessness on the part of the Fishmen at Bassa Cove—are of the most friendly character; the just and benevolent system continued toward them has preserved peace, and is more and more advancing habits favorable to their civilization and happiness.

It will be gratifying to you to learn that the unpleasant difficulties, which threatened a serious rupture between this government and certain chiefs in Grand Bassa, have been amicably adjusted and settled, and mutual confidence again restored.

In conformity with an act of the last session of the Legislature, authorizing the purchase of certain territory in the Little Bassa country—Messrs. Teage and Brown, duly commissioned, proceeded to Bassa, in February last, and succeeded in purchasing the remaining portion of that country, which secures to the commonwealth an unbroken line of coast from Digby to Grand Bassa point. We have also succeeded in extinguishing the native title to the entire Sinou country, which gives us at that point some forty miles of sea coast, and will be a great acquisition to the settlement of Greenville. In both instances, the native tribes have not only ceded to the colony the right of soil, but have also, by a formal compact, surrendered to this government the supreme judicial authority and political jurisdiction and control over the persons and property of all within that territory—and, at their own special request, they have been permitted to incorporate themselves with the colonists, subscribe to the constitution and laws of the commonwealth, become citizens of Liberia, and as such are entitled to the care and protection of this government.

I have received propositions, from other tribes along the coast to cede to the colony their territory—and I have commenced negotiations for two or three important tracts—but for want of funds these arrangements have not been perfected. Rev. Mr. McLain, however, under date 6th June writes—"We are succeeding well with the \$15,000 subscription, having gotten the 12th thousand pledged. Some of it, however, is not

payable before next year. You, however, may, I think, calculate certainly upon receiving in our fall vessel several thousand dollars' worth of goods for the purchase of territory." This vessel arrived a few weeks ago with goods amounting to upwards of three thousand dollars, to be devoted exclusively to that object—which will relieve us from this embarrassment, and will enable us to make other valuable acquisitions of territory.

At the particular request of the chiefs of New Cesters, I appointed a commission, some months ago, to proceed to that place to treat with the natives for the balance of their territory, and to perpetuate a claim we now hold to a certain tract in that country, leased to the colony some years ago. I regret, however, to have to inform you that in consequence of the opposition of two or three chiefs, who are anxious to continue the slave trade—influenced and backed by the slavers established there—the commissioners returned without being able to accomplish any thing. I learn, however, that recently a considerable change has taken place in favor of a transfer—and that, in a few months, we shall be able to abolish, forever, from that point, the abominable traffic in human flesh.

It is unnecessary, gentlemen, for me to repeat here what has been so often reiterated, to impress upon you the importance of extending as rapidly as possible, the territory of the colony. I know that you fully concur with me that no time should be lost in connecting our settlements by extinguishing the native title to all the territory lying between the extreme points of colonial jurisdiction—and I believe you will render all the assistance in your power to accomplish this great object.

I am aware that our efforts to increase our territorial limits, and to

extend the jurisdiction of the commonwealth over the territory in question, have been severely criticised—that our motives have been impugned—and that we have been charged with an ambitious desire to monopolize the trade of the natives. This, however—as must be obvious to every one at all acquainted with the position of these colonies—is not the case. It cannot, however, be denied, that we are bound by every obligation of duty to attend to the interests of our fellow citizens, and by every means in our power to advance their prosperity and happiness.

But the great objects at present to be attained are, first, to connect our possessions, by obtaining titles to the intermediate territory—and, secondly, to relieve the government from the numerous impositions that have been practised by foreigners upon our revenue laws. It is known that foreigners have established factories upon the very borders of some of our settlements, and have introduced goods, in large quantities, into the colony, upon which the tariff duties had not been paid—indeed some have boasted of their dexterity in eluding detection, and have avowed their determination to take advantage of every opportunity which may offer, to evade our laws. This we wish to correct; for if this state of things continues, how is it possible for the government to be sustained? Another great object we have in view, in possessing ourselves of this territory, is the incalculable good that will accrue to the aboriginal inhabitants themselves—we wish to bring them into a more immediate connection with the colony, which will enable the government to exercise a salutary control over them, by which means, habits of civilization can be more readily introduced among them, and many of their barbarous and cruel customs at once abolished.

Gentlemen, the subject of public schools will also claim your attention. That the present system of education in the colony is defective, and that some measures should be adopted to place it on a better footing, and which may make it more efficient, must be obvious to every gentleman—and I have no doubt you will give it that consideration which its importance demands.

I need not remind you, gentlemen, that knowledge is power, by whomsoever possessed—and that no free government can be maintained except by an enlightened and virtuous people. It is not enough that there be a few individuals of sufficient information to manage public affairs. To the mass of the people, all rulers are immediately responsible for the faithful discharge of their official duties. But if the people be ignorant or incapable of judging correctly of their conduct and measures—what security can they have for their liberties? It is certain, that if the people would retain in their own hands that which by nature they are entitled to, they must possess that knowledge which is essential to its safe keeping and rightful exercise. Education must ever be the grand safeguard of our liberties—the palladium of our political institutions—indeed, of all our rights and privileges.

In every country where the mass of the people are best instructed, will be found the most liberty, the most virtue, and the most happiness—and just in proportion to the want of instruction, will be found oppression, poverty, vice, and wretchedness. Who, then, among us will set themselves in opposition to the progress of mutual instruction? or who in Liberia will not be willing to sacrifice something for the education of our youth? Convinced, gentlemen, of the deep interest you feel in this subject, I deem it unnecessary to say more, or to recommend any measures

for your adoption, believing that you will do all in your power to further this great object.

I would call your attention, gentlemen, to the propriety of making some arrangements by which the act entitled, "An act to provide for the support and employment of the poor," may be carried into operation. For want of funds, the necessary buildings have not been erected, nor in fact have any of the provisions of that act been carried into effect; consequently, the poor of the colony have not received that attention and those comforts which their circumstances demand, and which was contemplated by the Legislature. We have in Liberia, as are to be found in all other countries, the aged and infirm; and it is our imperative duty to see that they are provided for. I therefore hope that at the present session you will take this subject into serious consideration, and will adopt such measures as will meet the wants of the community, in this respect.

The present system of the judiciary of the colony will of course present itself to the contemplation of the Legislature. I am not aware, however, of any important changes necessary to be made. It will, nevertheless, be worthy your consideration to determine the proportion the institution bears to the business it has to perform—you may also find it necessary to make some amendments or alterations in the rules regulating proceedings before the courts. Some differences of opinion, in regard to the mode of commencing actions and bringing defendants into court, have arisen between the Bench of the quarter court and some gentlemen of the Bar—which it would be well for the Legislature to define.

Considering, gentlemen, that we have no regular troops, and that the militia is our only reliance for sudden emergencies, you will doubtless

think this institution worthy of a review, and will give it those improvements which you may find it susceptible of. I believe there is but one opinion among the officers, in regard to our present system—they all agree that some alterations in the law regulating the militia of the colony, are absolutely necessary to make that only arm of public defence effective. That you may be better able to judge of the necessity of amendments, I have obtained from the officers of the militia a statement, which will be laid before you, of the present condition of the militia, and of such changes and improvements as, in their opinion, will place the militia of the commonwealth upon a better footing, and make it more efficient.

Permit me, gentlemen, to recommend to your consideration the propriety of increasing the restriction imposed on dealers in spirituous liquors. I am aware that various opinions are entertained in regard to the propriety of legislating upon this subject. We are told that the unrestricted use of intoxicating drinks is a moral evil that should be corrected only by moral means, and not by legislative authority. This opinion, however, is evidently founded on error, and cannot possibly be sustained by any sound reasoning. For we also know that a large portion of the population of this colony, in a very early period, were publicans, and that should be corrected so by law. Their operations, if not well checked, more or less, by the Government, would be very detrimental, and the Government should be enabled to meet them on the same footing as the publicans, and you will do all in your power to suppress this unwholesome trade. I would therefore recommend that the duty on all spirituous liquors imported into the colony, be increased at least 100 per cent., and that the license to retailers be not less than one hundred dollars.

I beg to call your attention to the propriety of adopting some special regulation in regard to the employment and management of those liberated Africans who have been recently landed in the colony from the slave ship "Pous." They are mostly young persons, who, if proper attention be paid to their training, may soon be brought into habits of civilization, and prove a great acquisition to the colony. Many of them have already been taken into the families of colonists, to be apprenticed at the next session of the Probate Court—under the act entitled "An act concerning apprentices," the provisions of which act amply secures to them good treatment and proper training. I would, however, recommend that suitable persons be appointed to the general guardianship of those apprentices, whose duty it shall be to see them at stated times, to inquire respecting their treatment, and to see that the provisions of the act concerning apprentices are fully carried out in regard to them, and report their doings semi-annually to the Probate Court.

I need not remind you that it is particularly your duty to consider the state of the public finances, and to adopt such measures respecting them as exigencies may be found to require.

The public buildings and other improvements, ordered by the Legislature at its last session, have proceeded with as much activity as the past season and other circumstances would admit. The bridge in the settlement of Millsburg has been completed: the work on the court house and jail, in the county of Grand Bassa, is going forward as rapidly as possible; the market house in Monrovia, the walls of which are already up, we hope to have completed in a few weeks; the guns ordered from Central Fort to Fort Norris Battery have been removed, and preparations are now being made to have them mounted without further delay. It

is necessary, however, to state that the appropriations hitherto made have been found altogether insufficient:—a farther provision will therefore claim consideration. I have also to inform you, that in consequence of our limited means I have not been able to carry into effect the law authorizing the Executive to garrison Fort Norris. I have been quite impressed with the importance of the measure, and have made strenuous efforts to carry it into operation, but without success. In a recent consultation with the officers in regard to it, a plan has been suggested, by which a garrison can be maintained, which will answer all the purposes required, at a comparatively small expense to the government. That plan will be laid before you; and I beg to recommend it to your favorable consideration.

The accounts of the receipts and expenditures at the Comptroller's Treasury, during the year ending 31st December last, being not yet made up, a correct statement will hereafter be laid before you; in the meanwhile it is ascertained that the receipts have exceeded those of any former year. From the accounts received, I have been able to make up the following statement, which will give you some idea of the transactions at the treasury during the past year.

Receipts.—Duties on imports, \$5,852; Anchorage and light dues, \$305; Licenses to colonial vessels, \$28; Licenses to commission merchants, retailers and auctioneers, \$834; Military and court fines, \$212; Sale of public lands, \$140; Sale of sundries at Central Fort, \$78; Deposited by the Executor of D. Johnston's estate, \$1,975; making a total of \$8,525.

Disbursements:—Paid expenses of the Legislature for 1845, \$378; Paid Lieutenant Governor Benedict for services in 1844, \$300; Paid Judiciary Department, \$918; Paid

for the support of prisoners, &c., \$1,044; Paid for elections, \$90; Paid expenses of light-house and signal master, \$226; Paid pensions, \$74; Paid for public improvements, \$2,486; Paid for territory, \$457; Paid collectors and school teachers, \$1,085; Paid balance due the estate of W. Savage, \$263; Contingencies, \$212; making a total of \$7,536; leaving a balance in favor of the treasury this day of \$989.

Gentlemen, in conformity with the 11th section of an act entitled "An act incorporating, bounding and regulating counties and towns," which provides that certain officers—specified in said act—shall hold their respective appointments during two years only, unless reappointed to the same office; and as the term for which they have been appointed will expire with the present fiscal year, it becomes your duty at this session of the Legislature, to provide for said vacancies. In the discharge of this duty, I feel satisfied that you will not be governed by favoritism or partiality; but with strict regard to the proper administration of public affairs, you will appoint those persons to office, who, in your judgment, are best qualified to discharge rigidly and faithfully the responsible duties with which they may be entrusted. It affords me much pleasure—and I hope it will not be considered out of place here—to bear testimony to the zeal and fidelity which have characterized the conduct of those officers whose term of present service soon expires. Each in his appropriate sphere, as far as has come to my knowledge, has discharged the business which has been committed to him to the satisfaction of his fellow citizens, and with much credit to himself.

These, gentlemen, are the outlines of such matters respecting the state of public affairs which I have thought of importance to be submitted to your

consideration. I do not mean to arrogate to myself the merit of the measures thus recommended—that is due, in the first place, to the reflecting character of our fellow citizens at large—they, in their sound discretion, have selected from among themselves those to whom they confide the duties of legislation: it therefore remains for you, gentlemen, who have been selected to judge of their expediency and practicability, and to adopt such only as in your wisdom may tend to perpetuate our republican institutions, and secure to our fellow citizens prosperity and happiness.

Availing myself of this, perhaps the last occasion I shall have of addressing the Legislature, I cannot omit the expression of my sincere gratitude for the eminent services you have cheerfully rendered me, in the discharge of my various official duties, and for the repeated evidences of confidence manifested to me, by yourselves and your predecessors, since my call to the administration.

The same grateful acknowledgments are due to my fellow citizens generally, whose support has been my great encouragement under all embarrassments. Indeed the steady character of our fellow citizens—unshaken by difficulties, in their love of liberty, obedience to law, and support of the public authorities, in my mind, is a convincing proof of their future success and a sure guarantee of the permanence of our infant republic.

I beg to assure you, gentlemen, that in the discharge of your present duties you shall have my full co-operation in all measures calculated to advance the interests and happiness of our fellow citizens. It is my earnest prayer that Liberia may experience a continuance of the Divine blessings, by which she has been hitherto so signally favored.

J. J. ROBERTS.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
Monrovia, Jan. 5, 1846.

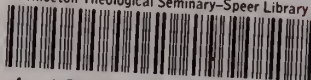


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